

E. D. Etnyre and Company

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Edward D. Etnyre founded E. D. Etnyre and Company in 1889. Their first product was the automatic hog waterer. The early 1900s brought new products: the horse-drawn water sprinkler, the first road oiler, a street flusher and the first bituminous distributor. In 1906, Etnyres made horseless carriages, but only a few dozen were built. The original company was on the corner of Jefferson and Second Streets where the Ogle County Sheriff's Station now stands.

In 1925, the company started making chip spreaders and continued to make distributors for oil, asphalt, and tar. During the Great Depression, the employees worked on the Etnyre family farm. During World War II, Etnyre primarily engaged in manufacturing truck tanks for the United States military to spread liquid bituminous products. Postwar expansion of the interstate highway system brought increased demand for the company's truck tanks and trailers.

In 1963, Etnyre introduced a motorized chip spreader that can evenly spread a dump truck load of aggregate chips during a paving operation. Today, the company is more diversified, but bituminous distributors remain a large part of Etnyre's business. Etnyre Product Groups' products are divided into three groups. One is equipment built for the paving industry such as asphalt distributors, chip spreaders, and flushers. The second group is truck tanks and trailers for transporting bituminous liquids, and the third group is heavy haul trailers.

More recently the company has added three new lines, the Blackhawk Heavy Duty Trailer, Bituminous Transports, and the Falcon Live Bottom Trailers, which you see when workers are repaving the roads. The Blackhawk Trailers are built primarily to haul construction equipment and paving machinery. They are equipped with tandems, tridems, or multi-axles and have capacities ranging from 10 to 100 tons. A former engineer at Etnyre said, "It is difficult to determine the exact size of this market, but he believes that up to 6,000 lowbed trailers with capacities over 40 tons are built each year." They also make many products for the government. They have many competitors since they are a worldwide business. A few of the competitors are SealMaster, Tarmac International, Inc., Mack Trucks, Inc., and Buffalo Turbine, L.L.C.

All of Etnyre's products are custom built for the customer's needs whether it is having more axles for the trailers for weight distribution or a bigger tank to haul more materials. Gary Christen, an employee of Etnyre said, "In the past few years business around the company has really picked up, and at times we have a hard time keeping up with the market." [From Bulk Transporter, "E. D. Etnyre Celebrates 100 years," www.bulktransporter.com (Oct. 6, 2005); E. D. Etnyre & Co., "Company History," www.etnyre.com (Oct. 4, 2005); Mark Nutter, "Blackhawk Trailer Paves the Way For Entry of E D Etnyre into Lowbed Market." www.trailer-bodybuilders.com Sept. 1, 1999; and student historian's interview with Gary Christen, Oct. 6, 2005.]